

Secretary for Ministries: Revd. Nicola Furley-Smith
Convener of Ministries Committee: Revd. Paul Whittle

24th August 2020
By email

Dear Colleague

As you may be aware the Past Case Review Learning Report (Mission Council 2019) recommended that ongoing and systematic pastoral supervision be made part of a minister's life in order to encourage reflection about boundaries and practice, create a safe space to consider difficult issues and ultimately help and support their ministry. In accepting the recommendations of the Past Case Review the need for pastoral supervision to be required of all United Reformed Church ministers was agreed.

In July 2020, Mission Council took the decision to implement pastoral supervision for all active Ministers of Word and Sacraments and Church Related Community Workers and set out some clear criteria to be followed. Please read the accompanying policy document carefully but the following is a digest:

1. It will be the responsibility of individual ministers to find a supervisor as the connection between those receiving supervision and their supervisor needs to work effectively. Supervisors should either be accredited by APSE (Association for Pastoral Supervision and Education <https://www.pastoralsupervision.org.uk>) or the BACP (The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy <https://www.bacp.co.uk>) or otherwise approved by the Synod. Both APSE and BACP provide pastoral supervisors in your area. Once you have found a pastoral supervisor you should inform your Synod Moderator.
2. The frequency and pattern of meetings will be decided between the supervisor and supervisee to reflect their agreed programme but should be no less frequent than every two months, or six times a year. Exceptions will be made for ministries where this regular pattern may not be possible e.g. Armed Forces Chaplains or if you are receiving pastoral supervision as part of your ministry e.g. Hospital chaplains. Again, you should inform your Synod Moderator that you are receiving pastoral supervision.
3. The supervisee minister and their supervisor will enter into a contract or covenant which reflects a mutual agreement between the supervisor and supervisee about the supervisory process and relationship. Most supervisors will have their own suggested format, although a model covenant that includes the flexibility for agreeing specific goals and ways of working is attached in the briefing document. You will need to sign three copies: for the yourself, the Supervisor and the Synod. The Synod copy should be sent to the Synod Moderator.
4. As well as signing the covenant the minister and supervisor will be asked annually to jointly confirm in writing to the Synod Moderator, or the appropriate Synod committee, that regular supervision is taking place. Your Synod will advise whom this information should be given to. Synods will in turn report this to the Secretary for Ministries who will keep a denomination-wide record. This should be completed by 31st January each year.

5. Supervision will be confidential between supervisor and supervisee unless the supervision raises concerns relating to safeguarding, or serious legal or wellbeing issues. In that case, either party should report their concerns to the Synod Moderator who may in turn consult the Synod Safeguarding Officers or other relevant agencies, i.e. Police or Social Services
6. Supervisees are also encouraged to regularly identify any training and development needs or share other matters related to supervision that might be addressed or supported by the Synod or local pastorate and to report them to the appropriate forum, e.g. the Synod Training and Development Officer.
7. All ministers who should receive pastoral supervision should find a pastoral supervisor do within three years.
8. For six sessions per year, the annual cost for an individual minister will be around £360. Although it is Mission Council acting as General Assembly who has agreed for this scheme to be mandatory, local pastorates play a crucial part in, and benefit from, keeping their minister well. Pastoral supervision will therefore be funded jointly by local pastorates and the denomination. Funding will be in addition to the existing allocation for ministerial training. Local pastorates will be urged fund half of the annual cost of their minister's pastoral supervision (Synod scoped posts will be treated as the local pastorate). Costs above this amount will be met by the denomination. I have therefore written to your pastorate urging them to support you in engaging with pastoral supervision.
9. Payment for supervision should be normally made by the minister and claimed back from the local pastorate on production of written receipts. The local pastorate may claim back the denominational contribution on an annual basis, normally in December of each year.

Please do read the accompanying documentation carefully. I hope you find pastoral supervision a fruitful experience.

With all good wishes,



Nicola Furley-Smith
Secretary for Ministries